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PORCELAIN

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# Porcelain

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in the collection of  
Cooper-Hewitt Museum



The Smithsonian Institution's  
National Museum of Design

*Cover illustration:*  
Germany, Meissen factory

**Allegories of the Continents: Africa**  
ca. 1745-60  
Porcelain, enamel and gilded decoration

*Gift of the Trustees of the Estate of James Hazen Hyde*  
1960-1-28

*Illustration, previous page:*  
France, Sèvres factory

**Bowl**, ca. 1765-1770  
Soft-paste porcelain, enamel and gilded decoration

*Gift of the Estate of Charles Sampson:*  
*the Charles Sampson Memorial Fund*  
1977-57-4

*Usually when one is confronted with a masterpiece, one is absorbed by the end product and gives little thought to the method of its manufacture. Great works of art rarely look belabored, but rather give the impression of having been created with great ease. As someone who has had experience throwing pots of different clays, I know the special problems and difficulties of working in porcelain. Because of this I am especially pleased to introduce the Cooper-Hewitt Museum's collection of porcelain.*

*With the intention of tracing the discovery and development of European porcelain beginning in the eighteenth century, and with some representation of earlier oriental antecedents, the collection contains fine examples from the major factories of Europe and the United States. Although not exhaustive, the most representative examples of each kind of production, from the early eighteenth century straight through to the twentieth, are included.*

*Building on the strength of early gifts to the Museum, the collection today continues to grow and expand. It is a collection of which we are proud. We are extremely grateful to Janet Annenberg Hooker for having given us the opportunity to share it with a wider audience through the publication of this catalogue.*

**Lisa Taylor**  
*Director*

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*Catalog design*  
Lorraine Wild



*Illustration 1*  
China, T'ang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.)

**Amphora**  
Stoneware

*Purchased in memory of Georgiana L. McClellan*  
*1958-94-1*

Few materials of such humble natural origin have risen to the great fame and universal popularity of porcelain. From a lifeless lump of clay the potter gives form to the material; from the intense heat of the kiln is born a pure, translucent, resonant and fragile material which satisfies the requirements of both fantasy and function.

When Europeans were still relying upon less distinguished ceramic materials—earthenware and stoneware—the Chinese were experimenting with materials and techniques which culminated in a refined and superior true, or hard-paste, porcelain body. The secret of Chinese porcelain, unknown to Europeans for centuries, was based on the combination of materials—a white refractory clay (kaolin), and a feldspathic stone (petuntse). These two ingredients, called the “bones” and the “flesh” of the porcelain, were mixed and refined to produce a smooth clay paste. Formed on a wheel or in molds, the raw porcelain was then fired at an extremely high temperature (approximately 1300 degrees Centigrade) which fused the two materials completely. The glaze was also feldspathic, which allowed it to join completely and nearly imperceptibly with the body. Decoration could be added in several ways: molded ornament could be applied to the object prior to firing; underglaze colors (primarily cobalt blue and iron red) could be painted on the body and fired at the same time as the glaze; and over-glaze colors, composed of glasslike enamels in a wide range of hues could be painted on the porcelain after the first high-temperature firing. A second firing was necessary to affix the enamels to the surface of the body. This required a kiln temperature sufficiently high to melt the enamels, but at the same time carefully controlled to prevent melting or distortion of the object's shape or glaze.

The specialized skills and materials of porcelain production represented a distinctly new tradition in the history of ceramics; true porcelain, with its unique qualities and characteristics was comparable, in some ways, to the long-treasured and prized natural material, jade. Chinese porcelain became the object of European admiration and passion, and the inspiration for important experimentation and innovation in the West.

In 851 A.D., Suleiman, a traveler in the East, recorded that “the Chinese have a fine clay of which they make drinking vessels as fine as glass; though they be made of clay, one can see the liquid contained therein.” This early



Illustration 2  
China, Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1912)

Charger, 18th century  
Porcelain, enamel decoration

*Gift of Mrs. Howard J. Sachs in memory of  
Howard J. Sachs  
1977-48-11*



*Illustration 3*

China, Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912)

**Plate**, ca. 1795-1800, probably for the British Market  
Porcelain, enamel decoration and gilding

*Gift of the Trustees of the Estate of James  
Hazen Hyde  
1960-1-68*

reference to the appearance of hard-paste porcelain contains several important pieces of information about this special material which would influence the culture, art and politics of Western Europe. Although by 851 the Chinese had already enjoyed a long ceramic history, producing wares ranging from archaic earthenware vessels to hard, non-porous glazed stonewares (Illustration 1), true porcelain was probably not developed until the T'ang dynasty (618-906 A.D.), about the time when Suleiman wrote about it. His statement also acknowledges that this miraculous product of the potter's workshop was based on an unusual type of clay. This was one of the fundamental requirements for making hard-paste porcelain that Europeans were slow to recognize. Lastly, the objects produced from this clay could be highly translucent, an effect which cannot be achieved with other ceramic materials regardless of the thinness of the body wall of the object.

The high regard which the Chinese maintained for porcelain was not unappreciated in medieval Europe. Marco Polo marveled at this unusual product during his visit to the East, and recorded its existence upon his return to Europe from the court of Kublai Khan at the end of the thirteenth century. However, actual examples of Chinese porcelain filtered into Europe only sporadically. It was not until the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) that any sizable quantities of porcelain, particularly of the well-known blue-and-white variety arrived in Europe by way of the overland trade routes. Even during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and early seventeenth centuries, Ming wares were accessible only to a very small, elite group of connoisseurs and collectors. Porcelain was, understandably, an expensive luxury and only those of aristocratic and wealthy position could afford the rare treasure. In order to capitalize on the more expedient sea routes to the East and thereby promote trade between Europe and the Orient, various East India Companies were organized in Europe during the early seventeenth century. These companies were responsible for massive imports of late Ming wares as well as those of the succeeding Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912; Illustration 2). The Dutch East India Company's trade with Asia was founded at the end of the sixteenth century; the period of astonishingly large imports of porcelain occurred around the middle years of the following century. For example, on May 12, 1644, in the



*Illustration 4*  
Germany, Meissen factory

**Tankard**, ca. 1715  
Stoneware, gilt metal

*Purchased in memory of John Innes Kane  
1941-43-1*



*Illustration 5*  
Germany, Meissen factory

**Coffee Pot**, ca. 1730  
Porcelain, gilded decoration

*Bequest of Erskine Hewitt  
1938-57-633*

midst of the turmoil surrounding the dynastic change in the Chinese government and the overthrow of the Ming emperors, an order for porcelain was placed for production in China “to be made fine, curious and neatly painted, according to the samples from Holland handed over.” It is clear from this statement that the Europeans specifically requested forms and decorations which would satisfy European tastes and that they were to be copied from models supplied by the Dutch. This order, staggering in quantity, included 2,000 large dishes, 5,000 half-size, 7,000 third and 10,000 quarter-size, 15,000 plates, 10,000 large teacups and 40,000 smaller, and 20,000 brandy cups. This entire order totaled 304,300 pieces to be sent to Europe for an eager and affluent market. Designs painted on later porcelains made for export to the West were often of purely European inspiration (Illustration 3), but traditional blue-and-white wares remained popular throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and are still popular today.

The passion for imported porcelain in Europe was, in certain instances, matched by similar affectations in the East. The Dutch, for example, were among the numerous Europeans who produced imitations of blue-and-white in other materials, particularly in faience (tin-glazed earthenware). On June 21, 1678 it was recorded that the Japanese governor of Chûzaemon requested mutton [!] for his meal, and asked that it be served

*“in a Dutch porcelain [faience] dish, and with it a Dutch jug or flask with Spanish wine.... It was fortunate that we still had available in the lumber warehouse 3-4 sample pieces of porcelain formerly sent from Holland to have similar ones baked here, and so we could satisfy His Honour’s whims with the sending of a dish and a flask we filled with wine....”*

The East India Company representative who recorded this amusing incident adds a delightful aside which indicates his astonishment at the governor’s preference for European ceramics:

*“Every now and then His Honour has rather many strange kinks in his head.”*

The great popularity of Chinese porcelain in Europe and the economic advantages which could be gained by discovering the materials and methods of its production



*Illustration 6*  
Germany, Meissen factory

**Cup and Saucer**, ca. 1735-40  
Porcelain, enamel and gilded decoration

*Bequest of Erskine Hewitt  
1938-57-437*

were primary forces in the development of porcelain in the West. Early attempts at manufacturing porcelain included the short-lived factory of the Medici family in Florence, which was established about 1575 and had ceased production by about 1613; of the total output of this factory only about 60 pieces survive today. This was, however, not a true hard-paste porcelain, but an artificial simulation known as soft-paste. Innumerable problems with firing and glazing the intractable material prevented successful production of crisp, flawless wares as fine as those of the Orient.

During the seventeenth century further experiments in the making of porcelain occurred in France; in 1673 Louis Poterat (1641-1696) of Rouen was licensed to make porcelain, and another factory was started in Saint-Cloud by the Chicanneau family. The latter enterprise continued into the eighteenth century, producing porcelains of the soft-paste variety.

Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony (1670-1733) was a passionate, if not obsessive, collector and connoisseur of imported Oriental porcelain. Combining his love of this luxurious material with his keen sense of economic aggrandizement, Augustus recognized the potential of producing true porcelain at his own factory. In order to raise money to replenish his depleted coffers, he arrested and brought to his court an alchemist named Johann Friedrich Böttger (1682-1719). Böttger was an idealistic and ambitious young entrepreneur who claimed to know the secret of transmuting base metals into gold. After repeated failures at accomplishing the impossible, he was reassigned to serve as an assistant in the laboratory of Count Ehrenfried von Tschirnhaus (1651-1708), a renowned physicist. Laboratory research included experiments in the refractory qualities of various natural substances. With astonishing results for all of Europe, this research led to the discovery of the long-coveted secret of how to fabricate hard-paste porcelain. The assiduous efforts of these two men finally produced the correct combination of specific china-stone and china-clay mixture with the extremely high firing temperature needed to fuse the two ingredients into porcelain.

Prior to the production of a white hard-paste porcelain Böttger developed a red stoneware of exceedingly fine and hard composition. The material was so hard, in fact, that it could be engraved on a diamond-wheel. An example of



*Illustration 7*  
Germany, Meissen factory

**Clock Case**, model attributed to Johann Gottlob Kirchner, ca. 1730-1733  
Porcelain, enamel and gilded decoration

*Gift of Irwin Untermyer*  
*1955-163-13*

this early red stoneware is in the Cooper-Hewitt collection (Illustration 4). This piece is in the standard European form of a tankard. The engraving on it, and on many of Böttger's red stoneware objects consists of traditional Western motifs—interlocking scrolls and foliage, and the owner's cypher or monogram. Expensive imported Oriental porcelains were often mounted in gilt-metal by Europeans to enrich and protect the fragile edges of the lip, foot and handle. This tankard is similarly treated.

About 1708, a white clay was used in Böttger's studio for further experiments; from the techniques which had been developed at Augustus' factory was born a true white porcelain, the first European equivalent to the prized material which only the Orient could previously supply. Decoration of Böttger's early white porcelains included applied motifs—masks, acanthus leaves and other baroque designs. Gilded decoration in the form of European versions of Oriental scenes, called *chinoiseries*, became popular (Illustration 5). These fanciful and theatrical simulations of Oriental life depicted figures engaged in domestic and ceremonial activities—the taking of tea, the burning of incense, and the sharing of restrained philosophical conversations—all posed within feathery landscapes punctuated by gracefully swooping birds. Often surrounding these scenes were European motifs, such as scrollwork, derived from popular ornamental patterns like those published by the designers Daniel Marot and Jean Bérain.

It appears that certain of the gilt *chinoiseries* and many of the gilt-metal mounts fitted onto domestic pieces were produced in Augsburg, Germany, a center for distinguished work in silver and gold. The gilding of porcelain was generally accomplished by painting the pattern with a mixture of ground gold and honey; a light firing in the kiln burned off the honey, leaving a lustrous layer of gold which was frequently thick enough to accept engraved details.

After a short but brilliant career which laid the foundation of the Meissen factory of Augustus, Böttger died in 1719. Meissen production of the first half of the eighteenth century was distinguished by the work of three accomplished painters and modelers whose names have become synonymous with the Meissen style—the enamel painter Johann Gregor Höroldt (1696-1776), and the modelers Johann Joachim Kändler (1706-1775) and Johann



Illustration 8  
Germany, probably Meissen factory  
**Pair of Elephants**, ca. 1750, mounted as  
candleholders  
Porcelain, enamel and gilt bronze

*Gift of Joseph F. McCrindle in memory of  
Edith M. Feder  
1964-8-1*





*Illustration 9*  
Germany, Meissen factory

**Allegories of the Continents: Europe, Asia,  
Africa, America**

Various models by Kändler, Eberlein and  
Reinecke, ca. 1745-60  
Porcelain, enamel and gilded decoration

*Gift of the Trustees of the Estate of James  
Hazen Hyde  
1960-1-28*

## Gottlob Kirchner (born 1706).

Höroldt worked at the factory from 1720; his skill in painting the enamel colors and his enterprise in expanding the range of colors available resulted in an entire family of designs which share a common source of inspiration (Illustration 6). Early Höroldt scenes were often vividly colored *chinoiseries*, akin in many respects to the gilded decorations described above. These designs were soon supplemented by landscapes, floral patterns of both Oriental and European derivation, and a series of harbor views.

From 1727 to 1733, the sculptor Johann Gottlob Kirchner was active at the factory as the chief modeler. Within a few years, Kirchner was joined by Johann Joachim Kändler, a sculptor who had been trained at the Saxon court. The creations of these two inventive and daring men stretched the potential of the medium to new limits. Their modeled designs were famous throughout Europe and were inspiration for the thousands of porcelain figures that populated the houses of the wealthy. The figures were incorporated into clocks (Illustration 7) and candleholders (Illustration 8), and they were enjoyed as table decorations. Until the advent of European porcelain, dining tables were frequently decorated with small-scale wax or sugar sculptures which often presented an assemblage of mythological, allegorical or historic characters. Porcelain provided a permanent version of these more ephemeral ornaments (Illustration 9) which in 1753 Horace Walpole described as the "Harlequins, gondoliers, Turks, Chinese and shepherdesses of Saxon China" so popular in the dining rooms of great houses.

At the death of Augustus the Strong in 1733, the new king Augustus II appointed his minister, Count Heinrich von Brühl (1700-1763), to be administrator of the Meissen factory, a position which he held until 1763. It was not surprising that von Brühl commissioned the factory to produce his personal service of tableware. Large services had already been produced at Meissen, including the "von Hennicke" service of about 1735, and the famous "Sulkowsky" service of 1735-37. Von Brühl's set, known as the "Swan" service is among the many distinguished works of Kändler. This superb and luxurious service, consisting of 2,200 pieces bears the arms of Brühl-Kolowrat (Illustration 10). The brilliant evocation of water, shells, sinuous foliage and elegant swans in the



Illustration 10  
Germany, Meissen factory

**Plate**, from the "Swan" service, 1737-1741  
Porcelain, enamel and gilded decoration

Purchased in memory of Commander Henry  
H. Gorringe  
1950-130-1



*Illustration 11*

Austria, Vienna, Du Paquier factory

**Cup**, ca. 1730

Porcelain, enamel and gilded decoration

*Purchased in memory of Miss Eleanor Garnier Hewitt  
1949-9-1*

molded decorations and the enamel armorial bearings make it one of Kändler's most renowned accomplishments.

The Meissen factory reigned supreme in Europe throughout the first half of the eighteenth century; the Seven Years War which began in 1756 caused disruption and a subsequent decline in the factory's production. During the same period challenges to Meissen's authority and domination were issued by other countries and factories. Meissen's position and reputation had already become past history; developments at other porcelain manufactories enliven the history of eighteenth century porcelain.

An early rival to Meissen was the factory at Vienna. In spite of stringent rules about protecting the closely-guarded secret of porcelain fabrication, the Meissen staff were, of course, familiar with both the materials and the processes involved. In 1719 a gilder and kiln-master from Meissen absconded to Vienna and relayed the secret of porcelain to Claudio Innocentius Du Paquier (died 1751), whose interest in capturing part of Meissen's market led to the founding of another company. Vienna porcelain of the early period was of a fine white paste, and distinguished by carefully painted decoration (Illustration 11). By 1744, economic pressures forced Du Paquier to sell the factory to the Empress Maria Theresa (1717-1780).

Other rival factories appeared throughout Europe during the second half of the eighteenth century, capitalizing on an expanding market for their products and the waning of Meissen as the leader in the field. Other factories represented in the Cooper-Hewitt collection include: Höchst (1746-1796); Nymphenburg (1747-continues today); Frankenthal (1755-1799); Ludwigsburg (1756-1824); and Fulda (1765-1790). Taking their lead from the artists at Meissen, these factories produced thousands of domestic items, as well as expensive and masterful figural works (Illustration 12).

Many of the forms which make up a large percentage of eighteenth century production were designed to accommodate the new and fashionable beverages—tea, coffee, and chocolate (Illustration 13). Porcelain is a poor conductor of heat, which makes it an ideal material for vessels used for the serving and drinking of these liquids. During this period the forms in common use included squat teapots (often based on Chinese prototypes),



*Illustration 13*  
Germany, Meissen factory

**Tea Service**, mid-18th century  
Porcelain, yellow ground, and enamel  
decoration

*Gift of Mrs. Edward Luckemeyer*  
1912-13-1-15



*Illustration 12*  
Germany, Fulda factory

**Figure of the Virgin**, ca. 1770-80, model  
attributed to Wenzel Neu  
Porcelain, enamel and gilded decoration

*Gift of the Trustees of the Estate of James  
Hazen Hyde*  
1960-1-42

chocolate pots with a second opening at the top to permit stirring of the thick mixture, and tea caddies in a myriad of shapes and sizes.

Important developments occurred in France at the same time as the flourishing of German and Austrian centers. Until later in the century nearly all French factories were using an imitative soft-paste formula for porcelain rather than the recipe for hard-paste developed at Meissen. The composition of soft-paste varied from factory to factory, and often included finely ground glasslike materials which, when mixed with clay, produced a white translucent body. Other additives to the mixture were alabaster, steatite and ground animal bones. At the best known French factory, Sèvres, soap was used as a component in the paste. Soft-paste porcelains are fired at a much lower temperature than hard-pastes, and the surfaces were frequently glazed with a lead-oxide. Painted decoration in enamel colors was fired to affix it to the surface. The enamels often sank slightly into the surface, a characteristic which, among others, helps to distinguish soft-paste porcelain.

Other early French factories that produced soft-paste porcelains are represented in the Museum collection. The factory at Saint-Cloud was patronized by the brother of Louis XIV, Phillippe I, duc d'Orléans (1640-1701), (Illustration 14). Saint-Cloud porcelain is notable for its pure white body and restrained decoration. Saint-Cloud designs were often closely related to similar forms in contemporary metalwork, particularly silver. Raised vertical ridges (gadroons) were a design element favored by seventeenth and early eighteenth century silversmiths, and at Saint-Cloud such patterns were frequently used.

Two other major French factories are represented in the Cooper-Hewitt collection. The Chantilly factory (c. 1725-1800) was owned by Louis Henri de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, (1692-1740). The factory of Mennecy (1734-1806), established near Paris, is also represented.

The Prince de Condé was an avid collector of Japanese porcelain, and it seems appropriate that much of the superbly crisp decoration on Chantilly porcelain is derived from the asymmetric Japanese *kakiemon* pattern (Illustration 15). A favorite motif was an exotic bird, perched on one leg atop a stylized rock. The enamel colors used at Chantilly are especially clear and intense—turquoise, brick red, and soft yellows.



Illustration 14  
France, Saint-Cloud factory

**Cache-Pot**, ca. 1730  
Soft-paste porcelain, underglaze blue  
decoration

*Gift of Mrs. George T. Bliss*  
1907-23-8



*Illustration 15*  
France, Chantilly factory

**Cup and Saucer.** ca. 1740  
Soft-paste porcelain, enamel decoration

*Gift of Mrs. Morris Hawkes*  
1942-25-22

The great triumph of French porcelain was the factory at Sèvres. In 1738 the brothers Gilles and Robert Dubois from the Chantilly factory moved to Vincennes and founded a porcelain factory. By 1759 the factory was taken over by Louis XV, and the manufactory was given the distinction of being the royal factory. The factory was moved from Vincennes to Sèvres, near the château of Mme de Pompadour (1721-1764), who became a major patron of the porcelain works. Sèvres porcelain, exquisite in details of modeling and decoration, became the most highly desired and imitated porcelain in the second half of the eighteenth century. Sèvres artists developed a series of ground colors whose richness and variety cannot be equaled—daffodil yellow, apple green, and a soft pink, to mention only a few. The porcelains were also given added enrichment with superb gilding; details such as leaves are engraved with minute veins and surface textures.

The Cooper-Hewitt is fortunate to have extremely rare examples of the original designs from which the porcelains were modeled and decorated, and in certain cases the drawings have been joined by the objects produced from them (Illustration 16).

Like Meissen, the Sèvres factory was commissioned to produce enormous personalized services; among the distinguished clients who purchased Sèvres tablewares was the elegant Mme du Barry (1746?-1793). Each piece of her service is painted with designs derived from classical sources which surround her initials (Illustration 17). Sèvres porcelains were also important diplomatic gifts among royalty; services were sent to Empress Maria Theresa, Catherine the Great of Russia, and the king of Denmark. In 1772 Sèvres began producing a hard-paste porcelain not unlike those of other countries, but the factory's greatest period remains the decades during which it produced soft-paste porcelain. It is somewhat poignant that the last great soft-paste service made at Sèvres was for its patron Louis XVI; this service was not completed until after the French Revolution when monarchy ceased to rule in France.

Porcelain production in England flourished in social, economic, and political circumstances different from that of either Germany or France. Whereas on the Continent porcelain factories had generally been founded, patronized and subsidized by aristocratic guardians, there was no direct royal intervention in England. Factories were



Illustration 16

France, Sèvres factory

**Verriere**, 1772

Soft-paste porcelain, enamel and gilded  
decoration

*Gift of the Estate of Charles Sampson; the  
Charles Sampson Memorial Fund  
1977-57-1*

France, mid-18th century

**Drawing for a Verriere**

*Purchase, Friends of the Museum Fund  
1938-88-8316*

established through the efforts of middle-class entrepreneurs; for example, the factory at Chelsea (established about 1745) was managed in its early days by the silversmith Nicholas Sprimont (1716-1770). Although the aristocracy in England purchased substantial amounts of porcelain from native factories, it was their purchases rather than direct financial contributions which helped many factories survive.

The earliest factory in England was possibly that at Bow; in 1744 a patent was taken out on a formula for porcelain and by 1749 the ingredients used at the factory included ground animal bones as a constituent part of the mixture. The burned bones were powdered and mixed with clay to attain the necessary strength for firing. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, English "bone-china" was commonplace.

Although the Museum collection contains good examples of Chelsea, Bow, Derby and Caughley, some of the finest examples are those of Worcester (Illustration 18). The Worcester factory had its beginnings in the Bristol porcelain works established around 1749. By 1752 the factory was known as Worcester; early wares consisted of simple blue and white pieces, along with fine enameled objects. Particularly popular were representations of exotic birds, insects and flowers contained in gilt scrollwork borders. The reserve panels in which these designs were painted were often surrounded by rich ground colors; a favorite was a deep and lustrous blue. Not only were the exteriors of objects such as covered dishes painted, but sometimes the interior as well, providing a delightful (if somewhat unsettling) surprise in the form of insects at the bottom of the bowl (Illustration 19).

Factories were established elsewhere in Europe during the eighteenth century, many of which are represented in the Cooper-Hewitt's collection. Notable are the products of the Doccia factory, near Florence, Italy, begun in 1735 under the patronage of Marchese Carlo Ginori (1701-1757). The Doccia factory used Chinese models for inspiration in their early wares, but later in the century produced objects of purely European form and decoration (Illustration 20). The elegant neoclassic shape of the coffee pot illustrated, for example, is derived from French models, and is enriched with two-color painting in a delicate and feathery style.

The nineteenth century was an age of great changes for



Illustration 17  
France, Sèvres factory

Covered Cup and Saucer, 1771, made for  
Mme du Barry  
Soft-paste porcelain, enamel and gilded  
decoration

*Gift of Mrs. John Jay Ide in memory of John  
Jay Ide.  
1977-52-29*

*Illustration 18*  
England, Worcester factory

**Covered Dish and Tray**, ca. 1775  
Porcelain, enamel decoration

*Bequest of Mrs. John Innes Kane  
1926-22-475*



*Illustration 19*  
**Detail of Illustration 18**



porcelain manufacturers. Industrialization of the craft had minimized the importance of the individual modeler or painter in favor of assembly-line production methods. Transfer-printing, in which an engraved pattern could be rapidly and repeatedly transferred to the surfaces of objects made hand-painting unnecessary. In addition, porcelain was challenged by new economic circumstances. In England, for example, Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795), introduced materials and techniques which supplanted porcelain—neoclassical forms derived from antique examples were copied in earthenware, a material more appropriate to classical shapes and decoration. The substitution of materials also reduced the cost of the basic raw material, and hence the expenses of production. Earthenware became highly fashionable again. It attracted an affluent middle-class audience while porcelain, once the exclusive prerogative of the wealthy aristocracy, was competing in the marketplace of the general populace. Porcelain companies which survived the great changes of taste and style of the period often revived earlier styles; one particularly favored during the first half of the century was the mid-eighteenth century rococo (Illustration 21).

Independent craftsmen and designers countered these trends, and translated the material into a highly individualized art form. The history of late nineteenth and early twentieth century porcelain is more often concerned with individual artist's contributions rather than large companies.

Important innovators in the latter part of the nineteenth century created the *art nouveau* style; represented in the Cooper-Hewitt collection are such figures as Hector Guimard (1867-1942) who worked in a porcellaneous stoneware. Other artists were called into service at surviving porcelain factories, including the still-active factory of Sèvres; one of the luminaries of the *art nouveau* style was the designer and modeler Agathon Léonard (born 1841) whose works were shown at the important Paris Exhibition of 1900 (Illustration 22).

Another important concern in the late nineteenth century was the Copenhagen factory. It had previously enjoyed a brilliant reputation during the eighteenth century; in 1883 the Royal Porcelain factory was reorganized under the guidance of Philip Schou. Schou employed designers and artists of high caliber, such as Arnold Krog (1856-1931). Krog's fame resulted from



Illustration 20  
Italy, Doccia factory

Coffee Pot, ca. 1780-1800  
Porcelain, enamel decoration

Gift of George B. and Georgiana L. McClellan  
1936.13.1

*Illustration 21*  
England, Coalbrookdale/Coalport factory  
**Covered Bowl and Dish**, ca. 1830  
Porcelain, enamel and gilded decoration  
*Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin M. Reeves*  
1962-155-2



his virtuoso handling of underglaze painting, and his inspiration in the development of radiant crystalline glazes reminiscent of the splendid Chinese ceramics of the Ch'ing dynasty (Illustration 23).

The Cooper-Hewitt continues to collect porcelains which illustrate the development of the medium from its beginnings to the present day. Indicative of the variety represented in the collection are a pair of bowls produced at the Ginori factory in Italy (Illustration 24). The bowls are dated 1924 and are in the *art deco* style. They illustrate the twentieth-century work of the factory which began at Doccia in the early eighteenth century.

Ceramics in all forms, and porcelain in particular, provide important insights into the culture and history of Europe, America, and the East. The Cooper-Hewitt collection, in its scope and range, preserves a portion of this history to be enjoyed and studied by present and future generations.

**David Revere McFadden**

*Curator of Decorative Arts*





*Illustration 23*  
Denmark, Royal Copenhagen factory  
Vases, 1904, by V. Engelhardt  
Porcelain  
*Gift of J. Lionberger Davis*  
1968-1-5,6,7

*Illustration 22*  
France, Sèvres factory

“Danseuse”, ca. 1895-1900, modeled by  
Agathon Léonard  
Bisque porcelain

*Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John Alexander*  
1910-41-1

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*Illustration 24*

Italy, Ginori factory

**Pair of Bowls, 1924**

Porcelain, enamel decoration

*Purchase*

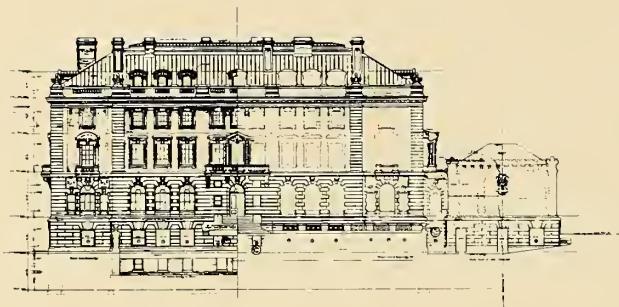
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